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# PUBLIC HEALTH REPORTS.

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## UNITED STATES.

YELLOW-FEVER INSTITUTE.

TREASURY DEPARTMENT,  
OFFICE OF SUPERVISING SURGEON-GENERAL,  
U. S. MARINE-HOSPITAL SERVICE,  
*Washington, D. C., September 13, 1901.*

HON. SECRETARY OF THE TREASURY.

SIR: I have to invite your attention to the subject of yellow fever, and to the discussions which have been published in the medical journals and in the daily press during the past few months regarding its transmission. The subject is one with which the U. S. Marine-Hospital Service, through legal responsibility, has been intimately associated since its reorganization in 1871, the publications of this Service being the chief residuary of the statistics and other facts pertaining to this disease. The annual reports are largely devoted to this subject. In 1889 a volume was published entitled "Yellow fever, its nature, diagnosis, treatment, and prophylaxis, and quarantine regulations relating thereto," consisting of contributions by medical officers intimately acquainted with the disease, either by scientific or clinical work. A volume was published in the same year containing a report of a commission of medical officers detailed by authority of the President to investigate the cause of yellow fever. The Service, through its national quarantine stations and cooperation with State and local stations, has many times prevented the introduction and, by its detention camps, the spread of the disease.

Within the last year a medical commission of the United States Army, operating in Cuba, has made a report, showing that the mosquito conveys yellow fever and declaring that this is the only method by which the disease is conveyed to man and that it is a particular species of mosquito only which thus transmits it. In their conclusions, it is stated that the cause of the disease is unknown. Based upon their findings, demands have already been made upon the Bureau for certain modifications of the quarantine regulations, which, for the present season, the Bureau, with it is deemed justifiable conservatism, has declined to make, but the matter will undoubtedly again be urged during the next season and it is incumbent upon the Bureau to have definite scientific grounds upon which either to modify its present regulations or to main-

tain them. On the one hand the Bureau has no desire to perform unnecessary labor, nor to impose unnecessary restrictions upon commerce, its traditional policy being to maintain a scientific quarantine and to impose no restraints upon travel or commerce not demanded in the light of science and experience. On the other hand the Bureau can not, in the interest of commerce, remove time-honored measures without definite justification therefor.

Since the announcement of the findings of the above-mentioned army commission, the Service has continued the prosecution of its inquiries concerning this disease with special reference to the findings of this commission. This has been done not only in the hygienic laboratory, but by special orders transmitted to the officers assigned in April to the several fruit ports of Central America, to the medical officers in Cuba and Porto Rico, and to those at the southern quarantine stations of the United States. A number of reports have been received and published in the PUBLIC HEALTH REPORTS containing facts of interest on the subject. To estimate these facts at their full value, to collect additional facts, and to give direction to future investigation, it has become necessary to devise a plan for a complete study of the subject in all its phases. This duty is incumbent on the U. S. Marine-Hospital Service by reason of the quarantine law of 1893, which provides for making the necessary quarantine regulations against this disease.

Section 4 of this law also requires—

That the Secretary of the Treasury shall also obtain, through all sources accessible, including State and municipal sanitary authorities throughout the United States, weekly reports of the sanitary condition of ports and places within the United States, and shall prepare, publish, and transmit to collectors of customs and to State and municipal health officers and other sanitarians weekly abstracts of the consular sanitary reports and other pertinent information received by him, and shall also, as far as he may be able, by means of the voluntary cooperation of State and municipal authorities, of public associations, and private persons, procure information relating to the climatic and other conditions affecting the public health. \* \* \*

That public health work of this character is incumbent upon the Service is further shown by the act of Congress approved March 6, 1901, in which an appropriation is made for a new building for hygienic laboratory, U. S. Marine-Hospital Service, the function of this laboratory, as stated in the law, being for the investigation under the Surgeon-General of contagious diseases and matters relating to the public health.

Moreover, Congress has provided a fund for the prevention of epidemic diseases which may well be applied to this investigation, as there is no epidemic disease of greater importance as affecting the United States than this one.

In view of the foregoing facts, I have prepared and submit herewith a plan for the organization of a yellow fever institute in the U. S. Marine Hospital Service, whose object will be to collect all facts con-

cerning yellow fever, to designate the specific lines of investigation to be made, and to make the investigations. The members of this institute are to be the medical officers of the U. S. Marine-Hospital Service, and others specially qualified. They will be assigned for duty to one of four sections, each section having a special list of topics for consideration. Each of the four sections will be under the direction of one of the medical officers on duty in this Bureau and said Bureau officers, with the director of the hygienic laboratory, the Surgeon-General, and a secretary, will constitute an executive board, which is to have general oversight of all the investigations. This furnishes a convenient method of administration, as the machinery of the institute will be readily operated in the Bureau, while the actual work will be carried on by members at various places.

At present, the Service work on yellow fever is being conducted by a limited number of officers working on more or less independent lines. The institute provides for observation and experiment by a large number of workers in accordance with a general system—in fact, organizing and coordinating the work that has been going on and which is to be done.

The stimulus to the members will be not only the scientific interest in the subject, but the publication of their contributions in the shape of bulletins as often as it seems advisable to the board; and with the Department facilities and necessary funds for incidental expenses, it is believed that the organization will meet with a degree of success warranting its existence.

To illustrate the workings of the commission, in addition to the scheme of organization, there is inclosed a series of topics proposed for investigation in each of the four sections.

Respectfully,

WALTER WYMAN,  
*Surgeon-General U. S. M. H. S.*

Approved, September 25, 1901.

O. L. SPAULDING,  
*Acting Secretary.*

[Inclosure.]

*Organization—Yellow fever institute—U. S. Marine-Hospital Service.*

*Object.*

The object of the institute is to collect all facts concerning yellow fever; to designate the specific lines of inquiries to be made, and to make them.

*Officers.*

The Surgeon-General of the U. S. Marine-Hospital Service, ex officio, chairman of the institute; secretary, the medical officer in charge of the bureau division of scientific research.

An executive board to consist of the chairman and secretary, the director of the hygienic laboratory, and the medical officers in charge

of the following bureau divisions, viz, division of domestic quarantine, division of foreign quarantine, and division of sanitary reports and statistics.

*Duties of the executive board.*

To direct the investigations, correlate the reports, and supervise publications.

*Members.*

Every medical officer of the U. S. Marine-Hospital Service and others specially qualified.

*Sections.*

Section A. History and Statistics.

Section B. Etiology.

Section C. Transmission.

Section D. Quarantine and Treatment.

Each section will be presided over by a member of the executive board. The chairman of each section will organize the work of the section, subject to the approval of the executive board. He shall direct operations and receive and classify its reports.

Members of the institute will be assigned to the class or classes for which they express a preference. These assignments, so far as medical officers of the U. S. Marine Hospital Service are concerned, will be made with the approval of the Surgeon-General, and their duties under the direction of the section chairman shall not conflict with the regular duties and regulations of the U. S. Marine-Hospital Service.

Publication of the reports received from members will be made from time to time as determined upon by the executive board.

SECTION A.—HISTORY AND STATISTICS.

[Chairman of section. Surgeon in charge of Bureau division sanitary reports and statistics.]

*Topics.*

Topic 1. The early history of the disease.

Topic 2. Relation to the slave trade.

Topic 3. History of recent epidemics (since 1850).

Topic 4. Relation to modern sanitation, especially paving, drainage, etc., in cities.

Topic 5. Why did not New Orleans have it in early times while Boston did?

Topic 6. Mortality statistics.

Topic 7. Maps showing yellow fever zones.

Topic 8. Maps showing the infectible territory in the United States.

## SECTION B.—ETIOLOGY.

[Chairman of section. The director of the hygienic laboratory.]

*Topics.*

Topic 1. The cause of the disease.

## SECTION C.—TRANSMISSION.

[Chairman of section. Surgeon in charge of Bureau division of domestic quarantine.]

*Topics.*

Topic 1. The transmission of the disease by the mosquito.

Topic 2. Can any other mosquito than the *stegomya fasciata* carry the infection?

Topic 3. Is the progeny of the mosquito also infected?

Topic 4. How many generations?

Topic 5. Can the mosquito become infected by any other means than by sucking the blood of a patient sick with the disease?

Topic 6. Can the mosquito become infected by contact with the dried blood discharges or other infected materials upon fomites?

Topic 7. Can the disease be transmitted by any other means than through the mosquito?

Topic 8. Can the disease be conveyed by fomites, or through the air, soil, or water?

Topic 9. The geographical distribution of *stegomya fasciata* in relation to the disease.

Topic 10. Is the immunity enjoyed by certain localities due to the absence of this variety of mosquito?

Topic 11. A study of the life and habits of the *stegomya* and allied species, especially with a view to their extermination.

## SECTION D.—QUARANTINE AND TREATMENT.

[Chairman of section. Surgeon in charge Bureau division of foreign quarantine.]

*Topics.*

Topic 1. Is disinfection of baggage necessary to prevent the spread of the disease?

Topic 2. Is any treatment of baggage necessary?

Topic 3. Mosquitoes in baggage, in merchandise, in cars, in ships.

Topic 4. Treatment of the patient.

Topic 5. Guards against mosquito bites.

Topic 6. Immunity of individuals, of races.

Topic 7. Individual prophylaxis.

Topic 8. Communal prophylaxis—sanitation.